



**American
Red Cross**

Connecticut Blood Services Region

**American Red Cross
Statement to the Committee on Public Health
State of Connecticut General Assembly– Proposed Bill 5732
February 27, 2013**

***Testimony of Matthew Skarzynski.
American Red Cross - Connecticut Blood Services Region***

Chairpersons Representative Susan Johnson, Senator Terry Gerratana and
Members of the Committee on Public Health:

My name is **Matt Skarzynski**. I am a Team Supervisor for the American Red Cross – Connecticut Blood Services Region. As a Team Supervisor at American Red Cross blood drives, my responsibility is to supervise blood drive operation, support the staff to ensure the collection of quality blood products and provide a positive donor experience while assuring the blood drive operates in compliance with all regulatory procedures. I have been with the Red Cross for twelve years. From 2001 to 2008, I was a Collections Technician and in 2008, I was promoted to Team Supervisor. Before coming to the Red Cross, I was a United States Army Medic.

I am here today to oppose Proposed Bill Number 5732, which would require licensed nurses at blood drives. In my opinion and in my experience, requiring a licensed nurse at every blood drive is like requiring an automotive engineer to change the oil in your car. The clinical training that a nurse receives is not needed in the scope of practice for the care of donors or to determine a donor's eligibility.

Most of what we call “donor reactions” that I have observed, including feeling lightheaded, have been minor. All collection staff are trained to handle these reactions by laying down the donor and bending their knees, putting cold compresses on their head and providing fluids, which generally is all that is needed to help a donor feel better.

The American Red Cross trains every member of our collection staff during a twelve-week program and yearly competencies, regardless of any prior training. All staff are trained in the same classes with the same curriculum. Our collection staff includes nurses (RNs and LPNs) and Collection Technicians. Some of our Collection Technicians are previously trained phlebotomists, prior military health care providers, emergency medical technicians, dialysis technicians and perfusion technologists. In my opinion, our staff is living proof that a well trained staff from different backgrounds have the ability to problem solve and are effective leaders. Thank you.